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People of the Week®

## New Force in Reagan's Foreign Policy

**The President's security adviser is concentrating power in the White House and cracking the whip over Weinberger and Haig.**

After a year of controversy and confusion, the administration's foreign-policy apparatus is being transformed by one of Ronald Reagan's closest political friends.

William P. Clark, 50, the President's low-profile assistant for national-security affairs, is moving quietly but forcefully to counter widespread criticism of a lack of coherence in Washington's handling of international affairs.

He has put Secretary of State Alexander Haig and Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger on notice that further public squabbling will not be tolerated.

At the same time, Reagan has been drawn by Clark into a greatly expanded role in managing foreign policy, an area that the President tended to shun during his first year in office. Also, Clark's strengthened National Security Council staff is pursuing critical studies that are designed to provide the basis for a coordinated national-security strategy.

Among the most important: A far-reaching analysis of American military objectives and capabilities around the world through the end of this decade. The study is being directed by former Air Force Secretary Thomas C. Reed, another longtime Reagan friend who is a consultant to Clark. One official says that Reed's report "will become the equivalent of a little red book from which everyone will get his marching orders."

**Briefings restored.** Reagan himself now routinely spends up to 3 hours a day in Oval Office deliberations on global problems and then heads home at night with a thick stack of reading material to study. The President's daily national-security briefings—discontinued for a time last year—stretch for an hour on many mornings as Clark brings in experts from the State Department, the

Pentagon, the Central Intelligence Agency and the NSC staff to background Reagan on international issues.

One of the first steps taken by Clark to give the President a tighter rein on the process was a directive spelling out in detail the authority and responsibilities of the NSC chief and the Secretaries of State and Defense. The presidential order has reduced much of the public competition evident earlier between Haig and Weinberger.

Clark has issued another directive under Reagan's signature that requires White House approval for overseas travel by department heads. One official says that during the past year the President at times was not even aware that the Secretary of State or Secretary of Defense was embarking on trips abroad.

The new directive has helped curb the sort of disarray that arose when Weinberger, while in the Middle East in February, raised the possibility of arms shipments to Jordan that were vigorously opposed by Haig.

Meanwhile, all major public statements issued by the Pentagon, the State Department or the CIA must now be cleared in advance by the White House.

In addition, presidential decisions that in the past were conveyed verbally now are formalized into signed or-

**President Reagan looks to William Clark to play key role in managing U.S. global strategy.**



ders to ensure that they are implemented without confusion or delay.

Aides say that Reagan realized after a year into his Presidency that he was not fully involved in key military and foreign questions. "Too many decisions were being made at State and Defense instead of in the Oval Office," says a senior adviser.

The remedy was to elevate the status of the NSC adviser to report directly to the President instead of through White House Counselor Edwin Meese, as was the case with Richard V. Allen. The former NSC chief resigned in January.

**"Not a Kissinger."** A trusted Reagan friend who served as his chief of staff in the California statehouse, the current national-security adviser has the confidence of the President in a way that Allen never did—despite Clark's total lack of experience in foreign affairs before Reagan asked him to come to Washington as deputy secretary of state in 1981.

"Bill is not a Henry Kissinger conceptualizing a world order and then flying off in the dark of night to carry it out," explains a White House adviser, "but he's very effective in making sure that the President maintains control."

Clark, who was nominated to the California Supreme Court by Reagan, is described as assuming the role of an "honest broker" of views to the President. He is "still playing judge from the standpoint of making sure everyone in the courtroom has his views heard," says an aide.

For the most part, Clark is slow to press his personal views, which aides describe as conservative but flexible and pragmatic. Nevertheless, Reagan relies heavily on Clark's judgment on an array of issues, including domestic matters. When advisers are sharply divided in their proposals, the President usually turns to Clark for counsel, sometimes asking him to stay behind after a meeting to talk in private.

Like Reagan, the lanky 6-foot-2 Clark owns a ranch near Santa Barbara. He has a penchant for three-piece suits and cowboy boots and shares the President's love of horseback riding. The two often swap catalogs on horses and ranch equipment.

Careful not to intrude on others' turf, Clark also gets along well with Reagan's Big Three advisers—James Baker, Michael Deaver and Meese.

But his amiable, low-key manner is not taken lightly by administration officials. "Never be fooled by that quiet, gentle smile," warns a White House aide. "Clark is tough and not afraid to make decisions." □

By ROBERT A. KITTLE